

Appl. No.: 09/708,898
Reply to Office Action of 6-23-2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for multimedia communication, comprising the steps of:

communicatively interconnecting a plurality of multipoint control units to a central controller, wherein the central controller is capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference;

identifying capability factors for each of a plurality of multimedia terminals and each of the plurality of multipoint control units;

responsive to a command to initiate a multimedia communication between at least two of the plurality of multimedia terminals, evaluating the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals;

comparing the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the multipoint control units communicatively interconnected to the central controller to determine a preferred interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals; and

responsive to the comparing of capability factors, the central controller directing a communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals via at least two of the plurality of multipoint control units.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the capability factors include identification factors, matching factors, and routing factors.
3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the identification factors include information relating to the identity, needs, requirements, and participation authority of the plurality of multimedia terminals.

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4. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the matching factors include information relating to the capacity and technological orientation of each of the plurality of multipoint control units.
5. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the routing factors include information relating to the most expeditious route for effecting the communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals and the multipoint control units.
6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising allocating conferences on multipoint control units such that the number of conferences that can be scheduled on a conference schedule is optimized.
7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein the conference schedule is optimized by combining conferences on a multipoint control unit so as to maximize the number of participants on the multipoint control unit.
8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising controlling multipoint control unit participant slots with the central controller.
9. (currently amended) A method for multimedia communication, comprising the steps of:
 - communicatively interconnecting a plurality of multipoint control units to a central controller, wherein the central controller is capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference;
 - identifying capability factors for each of a plurality of multimedia terminals and each of the plurality of multipoint control units;
 - responsive to a command to initiate a multimedia communication between at least

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two of the plurality of multimedia terminals, evaluating the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals;

comparing the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the multipoint control units communicatively interconnected to the central controller to determine a preferred interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals;

responsive to the comparing of capability factors, the central controller directing a communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals via at least one of the plurality of multipoint control units; and

controlling multipoint control unit participant slots with the central controller, wherein the central controller controls the multipoint control unit participant slots as if it were an additional multipoint control unit.

10. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the multipoint control unit participant slots are participant slots remaining after the multipoint control unit is optimally scheduled.
11. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when the start time for a conference arrives.
12. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when a participant requests an impromptu multimedia communication.
13. (currently amended) A system for establishing a multimedia communication between a plurality of multimedia terminals using a plurality of multipoint control units in communication with the plurality of multimedia terminals, the system comprising:
 - a virtual multipoint control unit communicatively interconnected to the plurality of multipoint control units and controlling participant slots of the multipoint control units, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is configured to

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interconnect the plurality of multimedia terminals in the multimedia communication via the participant slots of ~~at least two of~~ the plurality of multipoint control units, and wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference.

14. (previously presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals comprise at least one H.320 terminal, at least one H.323 terminal, or at least one H.321 terminal.
15. (previously presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is configured to:
 - determine available participant slots on each of the multipoint control units; and
 - interconnect the multimedia terminals of the multimedia communication via the available participant slots of the at least two of the multipoint control units, if the multimedia communication has a number of terminals that exceeds a number of the available participant slots on each of the multipoint control units.
16. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is further configured to:
 - interconnect the multimedia terminals of two or more multimedia communications via the available participant slots of one of the multipoint control units, if the two or more multimedia communications have a number of terminals that is less than or equal to a number of the available participant slots of the one multipoint control unit.
17. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals include a combination of H.320, H.321, and H.323 systems.

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18. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ATM network.
19. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over a LAN/Internet network.
20. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ISDN network.
21. (original) The system of claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is capable of communicating with terminals of various standards.
22. (original) The system of claim 21, wherein the terminals are compatible with the H.320, H.321, and H.323 standards.
23. (canceled)
24. (currently amended) A system for multimedia communication, comprising:
 - a plurality of multimedia terminals;
 - a plurality of multipoint control units in communication with the plurality of multimedia terminals; and
 - a virtual multipoint control unit communicatively interconnected to the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units for controlling the plurality of multipoint control units from a single location, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is one of the plurality of multipoint control units and the virtual multipoint control unit is capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference.
- 25-48. (canceled)

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49. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the capability factors ~~include~~ identification factors, matching factors, and routing factors.
50. (original) The method of claim 49, wherein the identification factors include information relating to the identity, needs, requirements, and participation authority of the plurality of multimedia terminals.
51. (previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein the matching factors include information relating to the capacity and technological orientation of each of the plurality of multipoint control units.
52. (previously presented) The method of claim 49, wherein the routing factors include information relating to the most expeditious route for effecting the communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals and the multipoint control units.
53. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising allocating conferences on multipoint control units such that the number of conferences that can be scheduled on a conference schedule is optimized.
54. (previously presented) The method of claim 53, wherein the conference schedule is optimized by combining conferences on a multipoint control unit so as to maximize the number of participants on the multipoint control unit.
55. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the multipoint control unit participant slots are participant slots remaining after the multipoint control unit is optimally scheduled.

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56. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when the start time for a conference arrives.
57. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when a participant requests an impromptu multimedia communication.
58. (previously presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is one of the plurality of multipoint control units.
59. (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.320 terminal, an H.323 terminal, or an H.321 terminal.
60. (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the multimedia terminals include a combination of H.320, H.321, and H.323 systems.
61. (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ATM network, a LAN/Internet network, or an ISDN network.
62. (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is capable of communicating with terminals of various standards.
63. (currently amended) The system of claim 62, wherein the terminals are compatible with the H.320, H.321, and H.323 standards.
64. (canceled)